



**FSC Certification Report for the
2006 Annual Audit of:**

**Wisconsin County Forest Program
Managed by Wisconsin DNR**

Certificate Number: SCS-FM/COC-0083G

**Under the
SCS Forest Conservation Program
(An FSC-Accredited Certification Program)**

**Date of Field Audit: February 7-9, 2006
Date of Report: March 16, 2006**

**Scientific Certification Systems
2000 Powell Street
Suite 1350
Emeryville, CA 94608**

SCS Contact: Dave Wager, Program Director
dwager@scscertified.com

Client Contact: Jeff Barkley

Section 2.0 (Surveillance Decision and Public Record) will be made publicly available on the SCS website (www.scscertified.com) no later than 60 days after the report is finalized.

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

- Wisconsin DNR, County Forest Program
- Contact person: Jeff Barkley
- Address: 101 S. Webster St., P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
- Telephone: (608) 264-9217
- Fax: (608) 846-5045
- E-mail: jeffrey.barkley@dnr.state.wi.us

1.2 General Background

The audit included a review of three Wisconsin Counties Price, Iron, and Ashland. This report covers the 1st surveillance audit, following the 2005 certification of the WI County Forest Program. Typically surveillance audits are conducted at a rate of one per year, beginning the year following award of certification.

The 2006 audit was conducted pursuant to the FSC guidelines for annual audits as well as the terms of the forest management certificate awarded by Scientific Certification Systems in 2005 (SCS-FM/COC-003GN). All certificates issued by SCS under the aegis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) require annual audits to ascertain ongoing compliance with the requirements and standards of certification. The full report of the initial evaluation is available on the SCS website.

http://www.scs-certified.com/forestry/forest_certclients.html.

Pursuant to FSC and SCS guidelines, annual/surveillance audits are not intended to comprehensively examine the full scope of the certified forest operations, as the cost of a full-scope audit would be prohibitive and it is not mandated by FSC audit protocols. Rather, annual audits are comprised of three main components:

- A focused assessment of the status of any outstanding conditions or corrective action requests
- Follow-up inquiry into any issues that may have arisen since the award of certification
- As necessary given the breadth of coverage associated with the first two components, an additional focus on selected topics or issues, the selection of which is not known to the certificate holder prior to the audit.

At the time of the March 2006 annual audit, there were 11 open Corrective Action Requests, the status of WI County Forest Program's response to these CARs was a major focus of the annual audit (see discussion, below for a listing of those CARs and their disposition as a result of this annual audit.)

1.3 Guidelines/Standards Employed

For this annual audit, the SCS auditor team evaluated the extent of conformance with the FSC Lake States Regional Standard.

2.0 SURVEILLANCE DECISION AND PUBLIC RECORD

2.1 Assessment Dates

Since the 2005 award of certification, there were audit activities undertaken on the following dates:

- On January 29, 2006 Jeff Barkley submitted (via email) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the 11 outstanding CARs.
- On February 7-9, an SCS audit team (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.
- Some additional consultations with DNR staff were completed following the field portion of the assessment

2.2 Assessment Personnel

For this annual audit, the team was comprised of Dave Wager and Mike Ferrucci. Both Mr. Wager and Mr. Ferrucci were part of the 2004 full evaluation as well as the 2003 preliminary evaluation, thus providing for good continuity.

Dave Wager

Mr. Wager is Director of Forest Management Certification for SCS. During his 5.5 years as Director, Mr. Wager has overseen the day-to-day operations of the program and conducted Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody evaluations throughout the world. Recent evaluations conducted by Mr. Wager include Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin County Forests, State of PA Bureau of Forestry, State of Massachusetts, Perak ITC- Malaysia, and Collins Pine Lakeview and Almanor Forests. In his role as Program Director, Mr. Wager oversees all first-time certification evaluations, annual audits, and contract renewal certifications on approximately 60 active clients. Mr. Wager has expertise in business and forest ecology (B.S. business, Skidmore College; M.S. Forest Resources, Utah State University) and utilizes both in his position with SCS. While studying forest ecology at Utah State University, Mr. Wager was awarded a NASA Graduate Student Research Fellowship to develop dendrochronological techniques to assess Douglas-fir growth in Utah's Central Wasatch Mountains.

Michael Ferrucci

Michael Ferrucci is a founding partner and President of Interforest, LLC, and a partner in Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, a land management company that has served private landowners in southern New England for 16 years. Its clients include private citizens, land trusts, municipalities, corporations, private water companies, and non-profit organizations. He has a

B.Sc. degree in forestry from the University of Maine and a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mr. Ferrucci's primary expertise is in management of watershed forests to provide timber, drinking water, and the protection of other values; in forest inventory and timber appraisal; hardwood forest silviculture and marketing; and the ecology and silviculture of natural forests of the eastern United States. He also lectures on private sector forestry, leadership, and forest resource management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mike Ferrucci served as a team member on the 2003 Full Evaluation of Wisconsin State Forests

2.3 Assessment Process

The following general steps were undertaken as part of the 2006 audit:

- Review of 2005 certification report
- Review of information supplied by selected Counties
- Complete of the field audit
- Synthesis of findings, and judging performance relative to the FSC Lake States Standard
- Presentation of results
- Preparation of the written certification evaluation report, and this public summary

The field portion of the audit included a broad array of field sites designed to illustrate a cross-section of stand types and treatments, focusing on harvests and other site disturbing activities conducted within the last couple years. During the field audit, the SCS auditors engaged in extensive personal interviews with County and DNR staff and contractors.

Tuesday, February 7, 2006:- Price County

Staff members

Pete Bartelt	Forest & Parks Administrator, Price County
Eric Holm	Assistant Forest Administrator, Price County
Kyle Schmidt	Forester I, Price County
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Pat Beringer	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Greg Mitchell	DNR Price/Taylor Team Leader/ Acting Liaison Forester
Nick Koltz	DNR Liaison Forester, Sawyer County
Greg Peterson	Forest Administrator, Sawyer County

Topics Covered:

- recreation uses and management on Price County forest
- attempts to communicate with tribes regarding arch and cultural sites
- increases in revenue generation from forestry for county
- maintenance of training records
- implementation of logger training requirements
- HCVF- Jump River and Flambeau Hemlock Area have been established

- regeneration of aspen when cut in spring/summer
- protection of watercourse buffers
- interview with logging contractor regarding county administration, training, and implementing BMPs
- snag and den tree retention
- variable retention within aspen clearcuts
- goshawk nest sites, identification and safeguards
- use of GIS

Sites Visited:

Concrete Park. unique cultural site and red pine thinning

Tract 07-02. 40-acre aspen clearcut

Tract 12-04. 31-acre aspen clearcut

Tract 03-04. 28-acre regeneration cut aspen/mixed hardwood (red maple, ash, birch)

Tract ?. Active hardwood improve cut

Tract 12-03. 2-acre white birch shelterwood, 1-acre aspen clearcut, 23-acre hardwood selection

Tract 10-03. 50-acre aspen clearcut.

Tract 16-02. 35-acre hardwood selection marked (not cut)

Wednesday, February 8, 2006:- Iron County

Staff members

C.E. Zinsmaster	Forest Administrator, Iron County
Gary Glonek	Forester, Iron County
Clyde Berglund	Iron County Forestry Committee
Donald D. Richards	Iron County Forestry Committee
Tom Thompson	Iron County Forestry Committee
Jodie Bednar-Clemens	Iron County Corporation Counsel
Bruce Bacon	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Jim Warren	DNR Chief, Forest Lands
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Carmen Wagner	DNR Forest Hydrologist
Paul Pingrey	DNR Forest Certification Specialist
Mike Luedeke	DNR NOR Regional Forester, Spooner
Tom Salzmann	DNR Lake Superior Area Forestry Leader
Darryl Fenner	DNR Team Leader
Kelly O'Neil	DNR Liaison Forester
Joe Schmidt	DNR Forester , Upson
Chris Niehaus	DNR Forester , Mercer
Heather Berklund	DNR Forester , Mercer
Tim Fitzgerald	DNR Forester/Ranger , Mercer

Topics Covered:

- developing rutting guidelines (CAR 2004.6)
- attempts to communicate with tribes regarding arch and cultural sites
- establishment of and survey for HCVF-
 - no harvest area within Penokee Range
 - planned research on songbird populations within the range
- northern hardwood silviculture- (also see discussion under CAR 2004.4)
 - response to CAR 2004.4- evaluation and approval process to ensure planned harvest meets WI DNR Silvicultural Handbook- Chapter 40 Hardwood Management
 - target maximum diameter of 20"
 - conversion to uneven aged stand through gap creation to establish next cohort
 - snag and den tree retention
 - crop tree release
 - removing low quality and risk
 - tree defects, e.g., basswood, and related growth, value, and economic considerations
- recent forester training on NHI- focus on rare plants
- recreation uses and management on Iron County forest

Sites Visited

Tract #1905 – 119 acre hardwood selection cut, 1st entry into 2nd growth stand

Tract #5-04 – 104 acre hardwood selection cut,

Tract #15-05- 56 acre hardwood selection, marked (not yet harvested)

Tract #10-05- 31 acre hardwood selection, marked (not yet harvested)

Thursday, February 9, 2006:- Ashland County

Staff members

Jim Warren	DNR Chief, Forest Lands
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Tom Duke	DNR NOR Regional Forestry Staff
Mike Luedeke	DNR NOR Regional Forester, Spooner
Darryl Fenner	DNR Team Leader
Tom Piikkila	DNR Liaison Forester
Bruce Bacon	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Chris Hoffman	Forest Administrator, Ashland County
Matt Hansen	Forester, Ashland County
Peter Anderson	DNR Forestry Technician, Mellen

Topics Covered:

- recreation uses and management on Ashland County forest—numerous hunter walking trails
- northern hardwood silviculture-

- applying the Silvicultural Handbook
- target maximum diameter 24”
- conversion to uneven aged stand through gap creation to establish next cohort
- snag and den tree retention
- crop tree recruitment
- gap openings
- crop tree recruitment
- removing risk and mortality
- marking of sale boundaries
- utilization specifications
- HCVF- ATM habitat south of Pinokee Range
- logging contractor interview
- timber sale administration
- BMP training

Sites Visited

Sale # 855 34-acre aspen clearcut; 6 acre hardwood thinning

Sale # 848 58-acre aspen clearcut;

Sale # 859 97-acre northern hardwood thinning, 3rd entry

Sale # 827 145-acre shelterwood in northern hardwood type

Sale # ?- Hemlock regeneration effort in HCVF area

Additionally we drove by several other sales and activities not selected including red pine thinnings, northern hardwood thinnings, aspen clearcuts, and hunter walking trails.

February 9, afternoon, Closing Meeting

Jim Warren	DNR Chief, Forest Lands
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Todd Naas	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Mike Luedeke	DNR NOR Regional Forester, Spooner
Tom Duke	DNR NOR Regional Forestry Staff
Tom Salzmann	DNR Lake Superior Area Forestry Leader
Al Tatzel	DNR Area Forestry Specialist
Darryl Fenner	DNR Team Leader
Tim Davis	DNR Liaison Forester, Bayfield
Tom Piikkila	DNR Liaison Forester, Ashland
Pete Bartlett	Forest & Parks Administrator, Price County
Chris Hoffman	Forest Administrator, Ashland County
Matt Hansen	Forester, Ashland County
Peter Anderson	DNR Forestry Technician, Mellen
Paul Lundberg	County Forest Administrator, Bayfield
Steve Probst	Assistant Forest Administrator, Bayfield
Mark Abeles-Allison	Administrator, Bayfield

2.4 Status of Corrective Action Requests

CAR 2004.1 (minor)	Reference: FSC Indicator 3.2.b
At the year 1 surveillance audit (approximately 12 months from award of certification), participating counties, or the WI DNR on the counties' behalf, must demonstrate how input received from Tribes was considered and utilized to improve identification and protection of Tribal resources, including treaty rights and cultural and archaeological sites.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response:</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <p><i>Price County (and Vilas County – SFI) met with Lac Du Flambeau tribe in Feb. 2005 and plan on having similar sessions 1-2 times annually. Iron County (and Oneida – SFI) had planned on attending that day also but had last minute conflicts.</i></p> <p><i>Over CY 2005 nearly all counties solicited input from private individuals, organizations, and interested parties in development of their County Forest Comprehensive Use Plans. Those counties in which the Tribes have historically maintained an active interest (e.g. Bayfield (SFI), Vilas (SFI), Jackson, Wood, Oneida (SFI), continue to have regular contact. There has been little interest from the Tribes in the County Forest planning process. At the October 2005 Society of American Foresters (SAF) statewide meeting on High Conservation Value Forests a representative from the Winnebago Tribe acknowledged that they had been requested to participate to a higher degree but they did not have sufficient staff to be active in such efforts.</i></p> <p>SCS Findings: The WI County Forest Program had made a legitimate effort to solicit input from Tribes. In the relatively infrequent instances when input has been received, counties have shown an appropriate responsiveness, and have worked with Tribes to protect cultural and archaeological resources. For example, Juneau County is working with Ho-Chunk Nation on a parcel of interest to the Tribe, Wood county changed a proposed access route to avoid a known site, numerous counties offer gathering permits upon request to tribal members. There is sufficient evidence to close this CAR.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: Closed	

CAR 2004.2 (minor)	Reference: SCS Group Criterion 3
By the year 1 surveillance audit, the WCFP must expand on their current internal control system (i.e., DNR liaison responsibilities with respect to certification, internal audits, etc) to improve Group Member conformance with the certification requirements. The internal control system must include a system and provisions for DNR to identify and address Group Member non-conformances with the FSC standard.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response:</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <p><i>Restructure existing County Forest audits (3 year cycles) to include elements specific to the specific forest certification system(s). Conduct training of Regional staff that are responsible for conducting these audits. Include documentation of changes in Public Forest Lands handbook.</i></p> <p><i>Restructure existing County Forest partnership meetings to include items specific to forest certification. Conduct training of liaisons and Team leaders that are responsible for these annual meetings. Include documentation of changes in Public Forest Lands handbook.</i></p> <p><i>Progress Completion</i></p>	

2/05	<i>Chapter 235 on Forest Certification administration added to County Forest Plan template</i>
6/05	<i>Solicitation and feedback on internal monitoring plan (see Internal Monitoring - FSC CAR 2004.2 document) from WCFA Certification / Legislative committee, DNR, and County Forest administrators.</i>
12/05	<i>Draft language completed for County Forest Group Admin. for Public Forest Lands Hbk., Pg. 290-10</i>
1/06	<i>Comments incorporated into County Forest Group Admin. for Public Forest Lands Hbk., Pg 290-10</i>
1//06	<i>Meeting with Regional DNR audit staff to restructure DNR's 3 yr. audits of County Forests.</i>
<p>SCS Findings: The SCS auditor verified that the above actions have been undertaken. The proposed steps and those already completed sufficiently address the FSC requirement for an internal control system. An example of incorporating FSC certification into the 3-year County audit process was provided for Marinette County, and the approach appears to work well. Although each county is only audited (internally) once every three years, partnership meetings provide an annual forum to review certification requirements with all Counties.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: Closed	

CAR 2004.3 (minor)	Reference: FSC Indicator 3.3.a
By the year 1 surveillance audit the Wisconsin County Forest Program must demonstrate that it is regularly utilizing the State Historical Society Database and other relevant resources to screen pending land disturbing activities for archaeological and historical sites.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response: <u>Corrective Action</u> <i>Change Chapter 210 in County Forest Plan template to require a check of the SHS database by WDNR liaison forester for all timber sales and other ground-disturbing activities.</i> <i>Add language to the Timber Sale handbook (page 32-5) requiring a check of the SHS be included for all County Forest timber sales and that such information be included on the Timber Sale narrative (Form 2460-1A).</i> <u>Progress / Completion</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Addition of 210.1.2 in County Forest Plan template has been made</i> <i>Changed page 32-5 in timber sale handbook – April 2005</i> <i>Communication to Foresters of handbook change – April 2005</i> </p> <p>SCS Findings: The SCS auditor verified that the above actions have been undertaken. Iron and Ashland Counties have been screening sales using the appropriate database.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: Closed	

CAR 2004.4 (minor)	Reference: FSC C.6.3, P.7
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By the year 1 surveillance audit, the WCFP must take necessary measures to ensure that DNR retains and fully uses its ability to execute authority over sale approval. Specifically, any significant deviations from the Silvicultural Handbook with respect to how northern hardwoods are managed needs to be identified and corrected.

Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments

County Forest Program Response:

Corrective Action

Effective immediately, the County Forest Administrator will convene with the Forester in question to provide solid direction to mark within the silvicultural guidelines. Northern hardwood marking needs to improve the stand quality, create canopy gaps to develop/release regeneration and remove poor quality, at risk trees. There will be an increased focus on marking overstocked hardwood pole stands as well.

County / DNR staff will collect field data on sales already closed-out to gain a better understanding of the ramifications of different marking schemes. The data will be fed into LS-TWIGS FVS model.

WDNR, in its oversight role, will not approve timber sales falling outside the parameters of the Silvicultural handbook unless an experimental silvicultural trial has been agreed to.

Progress / Completion

November 2004 – County Forest administrator met with Iron Cty. Forester to agree upon NH management protocol including:

- ◆ *Forester will establish 30% of his acreage in overstocked pole stands*
- ◆ *NHI data will be requested prior to marking a sale area*
- ◆ *Forester will establish plot points and collect field data to enter into TWIGS model on his sales*
- ◆ *Staying within the silvicultural guidelines for NH management as spelled out in Silviculture Hbk.*

11/11/04 Meeting between Forest Administrator and DNR Liaison to clarify procedure on field checking and approving of northern hardwood timber sales.

11/30/04 – 12/1/04 – DNR Silviculturist Joe Kovach and DNR Liaison Kelly O’Neil conducted a detailed analysis of four sales by Iron Cty. forester

1/24/05 - WDNR Secretary Scott Hassett responds to Iron Cty. forester after he appealed the local DNR’s disapproval of timber sale tract #22-03. DNR Administration supported local DNR position.

4/05 - Regional Forester Mike Luedeke, Team Leader Darryl Fenner, Area Forestry Leader Tom Salzmann, Iron Cty. Liaison Kelly O’Neil and Iron County Forest Administrator Charles Zinsmaster developed and agreed to a standardized evaluation and review procedure for uneven-aged NH sales.

2005 - Ongoing evaluations of NH timber sales via Iron Cty. NH Uneven-aged Evaluation procedure. Evaluations conducted jointly by DNR / County staff.

11/15/05 Iron County Northern Hardwood meeting - County & DNR staff

1/18/06 Meeting to assess the effectiveness of NH protocol in Iron County (Park Falls).

SCS Findings: The audit team spent considerable time on this issue during the 1-day audit in Iron

County. Four northern hardwood sales were reviewed, including one sale marked by the forester that triggered this concern. Of most significance, the auditors verified that DNR's approval process is properly functioning. The auditors verified that marking done by all foresters is being evaluated for its conformance with DNR silvicultural guidelines. Iron County developed a review methodology that strives to be as objective as possible, covers the appropriate elements of northern hardwood silviculture, and is efficient enough to be used in the field on a consistent basis. Numerous sales have been rejected, including the majority by the forester in question, using this process. There is sufficient evidence to close this CAR. Prior to the 2007 audit we will request a summary of the previous year's sale review process results for Iron County. Based upon a review of this information we will decide whether or not to visit Iron County again in 2007.

Position in the end of this audit: Closed

CAR 2004.5 (minor)

Reference: FSC C.6.4

By the year 2 surveillance audit, WCFP must complete the following two phases to ensure full conformance to Criterion 6.4:

Phase 1: WCFP must work with WI DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources to complete the assessment for gaps in representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape that are best filled on county forests.

Note: Endangered Resources has an approach for summarizing representative sample needs and opportunities by county using the Ecological Landscapes Handbook, Regional Ecological Assessments, Community Restoration & Old Growth, Wisconsin Land Legacy Study, and Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Ecoregional Plan

Phase 2: WCFP must initiate the process to formally recognize (this does not prohibit active management) any representative samples identified in Phase 1 that are unique to county forests and/or clearly best suited for SNA or some other form of special management designation on county forests.

Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments

County Forest Program Response:

Corrective Action

- *Randy Hoffman to complete assessment of each County Forest and identify gaps of existing ecosystems that may be present on County Forests*
- *Counties identify and implement management to maintain these representative ecosystems in their County Forest Plans*

Progress / Completion

- *07/04 - Randy Hoffman and Rebecca Schroeder of DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources meet with WCFA's Colette Matthews*
- *Randy Hoffman has had contact with 25 of the 29 counties in the County Forest system as of 12/28/05. This includes 15 of the 16 counties in FSC (Taylor still pending). Some of the counties (e.g. Taylor) have adjacent forests (e.g. Chequamegon-Nicolet N.F.) that satisfy all of the ecological needs within that particular ecological land type.*
- *Identification of these areas crosses over with FSC CAR 2004.10 as it relates to HCVF forests.*
- *Randy Hoffman has met with the County Forest certification committee three times in 2005 to discuss this CAR and 2004.10.*
- *Counties are (have) individually addressing the recommended sites and evaluating the appropriate management on their particular forest.*

- *Identification and proposed management of these areas is encompassed in Chapter 500 and 800 of the County Plans.*

SCS Findings: Good progress to-date has been made. Iron and Ashland County have made progress on the CAR through their work with Randy Hoffman of Endangered Resources. It appears the Counties will be able to conform with this CAR by its 2007 surveillance audit due date. A contact log of exchanges between Randy Hoffman and Counties was provided to SCS. The log demonstrates that considerable work identifying opportunities to establish/maintain representative areas on County Forests has been completed to-date. There has been some variability among Counties in their understanding of the utility of representative samples and in the receptiveness of Counties to the process. There is an opportunity for the group manager to ensure all FSC enrolled Counties understand and are receptive to this process.

Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit

CAR 2004.6 (minor)	Reference: FSC Criterion 6.5
By the year 1 surveillance audit, the WCFP must establish clear written criteria for acceptable levels of rutting, compaction, and residual damage, and implement these criteria in their timber sale administration process.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response:</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DNR will settle on a definition of an “excessive rut”. Counties will use that definition as a benchmark and apply similar criteria to their local county.</i> • <i>County determinations will be entered in timber sale contract and County Forest Plan</i> <p><u>Progress / Completion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>County Forests letting DNR take lead on this (Carmen Wagner - DNR Hydrologist).</i> • <i>*To promote consistency statewide</i> • <i>3 drafts of rutting policy for State Forests have been developed</i> • <i>County Forest certification committee has actively participated in the development of the State policy, providing comments on all 3 drafts. Carmen Wagner has met with committee on two occasions.</i> • <i>County forest certification committee will evaluate final draft State Forest policy and provide a recommendation to all county forests on whether to mirror the State policy, or settle upon a slightly different alternative.</i> • <i>March 3, 2006 WCFA Certification / Legislative committee meeting agenda - Action item</i> <p>SCS Findings: Substantial efforts have been undertaken to address this CAR. An interim rutting standard has been developed by the State that covers the key aspects: location, length, and depth of rut. To develop the interim standard the State used both sound science and public outreach to ensure the standard accomplishes soil and water quality protection goals, and that key participants are willing and able to implement it. The audit team had underestimated the amount of work that was necessary to develop an effective rutting standard. The WCFP is going to meet in March to make a decision on whether to adopt the State interim standard, review the implementation of the current interim standard on State lands, or develop their own standard. Because of the substantial progress to-date by DNR on developing a standard, this CAR is extended by one year.</p>	

Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit	
CAR 2004.7 (minor)	Reference: FSC Indicators 6.6.e, 7.1.c.2
By the year 1 surveillance audit a written prescription must accompany all herbicide and pesticide applications.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
County Forest Program Response: <u>Corrective Action</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide counties with a sample form to use to document herbicide applications, including prescriptions.</i> • <i>Provide training at an upcoming WCFA meeting on this CAR</i> <u>Progress / Completion</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sample form was completed and distributed to counties – 4/ 05</i> • <i>County Forest Plan template (505.5.2) has been changed to include reference to need for a written prescription.</i> <p>SCS Findings: The above actions will ensure written prescriptions accompany herbicide and pesticide applications. The sample form meets the intent of this requirement. There is sufficient evidence to close CAR. Implementation of these actions will be reviewed in future audits.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: Closed	

CAR 2004.8 (minor)	Reference: FSC Indicator 7.3.a.
DNR must expand training programs to include landscape level planning, identification and control of invasive exotic plants, identification and protection of rare/unique plant communities, and identification and protection of cultural resources. Note: “training” does not require formal classes/workshops in every instance; in many cases improving content and distribution of written training material may suffice.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
County Forest Program Response: <u>Progress / Completion</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Invasive Species of the Upper Midwest - E. Czarapata, has been purchased for all Counties as an excellent reference for identification and management.</i> • <i>Training session on Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species is an agenda item for March 30-31 WCFA Spring Administrator’s Meeting (Instructor Jane Cummings-Carlson, DNR Forest Health).</i> • <i>DNR efforts are progressing on invasive species management. The County Forests are participating in an advisory committee for one of the four tracks (Track 1 - Forestry BMP’s for Invasive Species) of DNR’s effort to develop BMP’s for Invasive Species in Wisconsin.</i> • <i>NHI training for County Forest staff scheduled for Feb. 13 & 14, 2006</i> • <i>The County Forests continue to be very engaged in the Forest and Health status of Wisconsin’s forests through contact with DNR’s Forest Health staff. Contact includes on-site visits by Regional Forest Health staff, distribution of printed and electronic materials, and presentations by Forest Health staff at County Forest functions.</i> <p>SCS Findings: As noted above good progress is being made on this CAR. The audit team reviewed training files of Price, Iron, and Ashland County staff. Of particular note, Iron county foresters had</p>	

recently received training in rare plant identification. All employees had proper BMP training. CAR is due in 2007.

Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit

CAR 2004.9 (minor)

Reference: FSC Criteria 8.1, 8.2

By the year 1 surveillance audit, the WCFP must develop the framework for and begin implementing a program for consistent and replicable monitoring of changes in forest conditions, over time. Note, SCS understands that development and full implementation of the comprehensive monitoring program may take longer than 1 year and as a result SCS does not expect it to be complete at this time. As part of this monitoring program, the 10-year plan revision must include a section that discusses changes in forest condition since the last 10-year plan.

Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments

County Forest Program Response:

- *Incorporate a monitoring section in Chapter 3300 of the County Forest Plans*
- *Collaborate with Endangered Resources staff on how best to monitor forest conditions*
- *Collaborate with Parks and Recreation staff/ SCORP plans to determine recreational changes since last County planning period.*

Progress / Completion

- *Completed County Plan template change to Chapter 3300 to include a Section on monitoring. This included sample spreadsheets for changes to Forest types since the last planning period and also to evaluate timber harvests during last planning period against targets identified during last planning period.*
- *Loren Ayers - DNR Endangered Resources Monitoring Section is the lead on this CAR, particularly as it relates to wildlife. He has met on three separate occasions with the county forest certification committee to work on this CAR. The State DNR has statutory responsibility for wildlife in the State and therefore bears responsibility for monitoring activities for fauna. It is not feasible, nor practical, to monitor fauna on an individual forest basis. The State and Counties have a Regional framework employed for monitoring wildlife. From the CWCP, DNR Endangered Resources is extracting the existing surveys and monitoring applicable to each County. The species of greatest conservation need are also being identified for each county and ties to the priority forest communities within the county are being made. While this is not true monitoring, it provides baseline data for wildlife by correlating their populations with forest habitat. As the CWCP is periodically updated, this will provide a comparison to evaluate change.*
- *Monitoring other indicators per Criterion 8.2. A comprehensive list of reports and data was compiled and aligned to the indicators in this criterion (see summary sheet). Use of this information is being evaluated for placement in Chapter 3000 of the County Forest Plans. This is to be taken up at the 3/3/06 county forest certification meeting. Many of the reports are now already required through administrative rule or manual code. The County Forest program believes that during the initial certification audit it also may not have been clear the number and scope of the monitoring efforts being conducted.*

FIA data was generated for all counties in the County Forest program. Information on net growth, volume, and growing stock mortality were gathered. As previously acknowledged this information is not statistically relevant for an individual county but does reflect the program as a whole. The DNR and Wisconsin County Forests Association feel this information provides representative growth,

volume, and mortality for the counties. Comparison with prior year's data has been completed and confirms our growth to removal ratios are sustainable.

- *Framework for monitoring:*

Fauna - DNR responsibility. Working on lists for species of greatest conservation need in each county as baseline data.

Flora - Joint responsibility of DNR and County. Incorporate existing data on a more consistent and replicable basis. Formally identify those reports, surveys, and analyses to be monitored in County Forest Plans - Chapter 3000.

SCS Findings: The addition of Chapter 3000 and the proposed framework for expanding flora & fauna monitoring and better utilization of existing monitoring information will improve the County Forest's monitoring program. The document *County Forest Program Monitoring & Assessment Protocol* (appendix A) demonstrates that the majority of indicators under Criterion 8.2 are monitored. There is merit to the argument that the replicable monitoring requirement (for net growth, volume, growing stock mortality) is addressed through the FIA's continuous forest inventory. FIA data is replicable and statistically relevant for the County forest program as a whole. The consistency in forest management across counties allows the program-wide FIA monitoring results to be of value and meaning for an individual county, even through it lacks statistical significance for an individual county. With the County Forest program, because all Counties follow the Silvicultural Handbook, Public Lands Handbook, and Recon procedures there is a high level of consistency in forest management.

The framework to improve monitoring of flora and fauna is in its early stages, and will likely take 3 years to fully implement it. Ecological Inventory and Monitoring has put forth a well thought out 7-step approach (see appendix B) that will lead to improved flora and fauna monitoring, the approach:

- considers each Counties' goals of and opportunities for non-timber resource management;
- is relevant to aspects of current management that can be altered, thus allowing for adaptive management based on the results of monitoring;
- evaluates and makes best use of existing monitoring information; and
- focuses monitoring on species, communities, or areas of greatest conservation need, thus maximizing the utility.

The approach is to be further refined over the coming year, and be implemented according to the following timeline (see appendix B for step details):

- March 2006 to March 2007 – finalize the draft process and seek county support, complete step 1 for all FSC forests
- March 2007 to March 2008 - Complete steps 2-6
- March 2008 - Implement replicable field monitoring (step 7) per the findings of step 6

County Forests will not have to wait until 2008 to see monitoring achievements. For example, by March 2007 species of greatest conservation need for each County will be identified and management guidelines for those species will be available.

The stand examination process, Recon, is a key component to forest monitoring on the County Forests. The frequency of Recon update is set at 5% per year. However, some Counties are significantly backlogged on updating Recon. For the total program, ~31% of the recon is older than the target goal of not exceeding 20 years. Additionally 9% (of that 31%) is at least 30 years old. Indicator 8.1.a. states that the *frequency of monitoring follows the schedule in the management plan.*

<p>In conclusion, CAR 2004.9 is being closed and replaced with a narrower CAR (CAR 2006.1) because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial CAR overstated the level of non-conformance with C.8.1 and C.8.2., and underestimated the amount of time necessary to institute meaningful new monitoring endeavors. • The WCFP is early in the process of expanding fauna monitoring, and continued progress is needed • A new non-conformance with respect to Recon update was noted in the 2006 audit. <p>CAR 2006.1: By the 2007 surveillance audit, WCFP will improve its monitoring systems by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. setting targets to bring Recon back into currency- and demonstrating progress on those targets; 2. demonstrating continued progress on implementing the improved flora and fauna monitoring framework; 3. expanding chapter 3000 to include the monitoring elements listed in <i>County Forest Program Monitoring & Assessment Protocol</i> and how those provide feedback into management of County Forests. <p>Position in the end of this audit: Closed; replaced with CAR 2006.1</p>
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CAR 2004.10 (minor)	Reference: FSC Criteria 9.1, 9.2
<p>By the year 2 surveillance audit, WCFP must expand upon the current HCVF process. Either the WI DNR staff or county staffs must define the attributes that merit designation as high conservation value (as set forth in Principle 9 of the Lake States Regional Standard) utilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge and information that county forestry and regional WI DNR staff possess regarding the local forest management area; • ecological targets in need of protection (detailed by the Bureau of Endangered Resources), which are derived from the Ecological Landscapes Handbook, Regional Ecological Assessments, Community Restoration & Old Growth, Wisconsin Land Legacy Study, and Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Ecoregional Plan; • NHI database; <p>information gained through consultations with Bureau of Endangered Resources and other interested local and Statewide stakeholders.</p>	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response:</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Counties will include HCVF sites and the management of same in their County Forest plans. Identification of sites is scheduled for Chapter 530 and management implications are scheduled for Chapter 850.3.</i> • <i>Consultation between Endangered Resources staff and County Forest personnel to identify these areas. Similar to collaboration ongoing for FSC CAR 2004.5.</i> <p><u>Progress / Completion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>County plan template is complete, originally drafted by Randy Hoffman, Endangered Resources. Section 530 and 850 of the County Forest Plan reference HCVF. Section 530 is intended to identify sites and 850 to identify management needed to retain those sites. Endangered Resources continues to correspond with County Forests to identify gaps in representative ecosystems (see CAR 2004.5) and HCVF opportunities.</i> 	

- Hoffman has met with 25 of 29 counties to identify representative ecosystems and HCVF opportunities. This includes 15 of the 16 FSC counties (Taylor not completed).
- County Plans are addressing HCVF but all are not completed / approved as yet.

SCS Findings: Price, Iron, and Ashland 15-year plans include discussions on HCVF. In general counties are making good progress on this CAR through their work with Randy Hoffman of Endangered Resources. There has been some variability in the receptiveness of Counties to the process. There is an opportunity for the group manager to ensure all FSC enrolled Counties are engaging in the HCVF identification process.

Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 audit

CAR 2004.11 (minor)	Reference: FSC Criterion 9.3
<p>Phase 1: By the time of the year 1 surveillance audit WCFP must develop and implement monitoring protocols designed to assess the effectiveness of existing HCVF.</p> <p>Phase 2: By the year 2 surveillance audit, monitoring protocols to assess the expanded HCVF (resulting form CAR 2004.10) must be in-place.</p>	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response:</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following DNR's lead the counties will develop monitoring protocols • Consultation between Endangered Resources staff and County Forest personnel on most practical methodology • DNR Endangered Resources (Hoffman) conduct pilot of Releve' survey plots on select county(s) • DNR report back to county forest certification committee on costs of survey • Based on feedback from DNR pilot, determine the need and how best to establish Releve' plots on HCVF areas <p><u>Progress / Completion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randy Hoffman from DNR Endangered Resources met with the county forest certification committee in Dec. 2005 and agreed to devote 10 days to establishing Releve' plots on select counties. <p>SCS Findings: Some initial work in response to this CAR is underway, i.e., plans to establish Releve plots in some County HCVF areas. Also, the flora and fauna monitoring, as detailed under CAR 2004.9, addresses HCVF. Phase 2 of this CAR is due at the 2007 surveillance audit.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: Due 2007 surveillance audit	

Recommendations:

The following recommendations were stipulated at the time of award of certification. Acting upon recommendations is entirely at the discretion of the certificate holder, and not acting upon them does not

jeopardize the certificate. Recommendations are intended to show the certificate holder opportunities where further conformance with the standard is possible.

REC 2004.1	Reference: SCS Group Criterion C.1
The WI County Forest Program should look for ways that individual Counties can work together as one group or regional groups to facilitate regional or statewide related stakeholder communications.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
Recommendation 2004.1 has been addressed; see WCFP response below. <i>The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) meets a minimum of 3 times annually (Bd. Of Directors meetings 4-5 times), has representatives that participate in a number of projects statewide and in the Lake States (Public Forest Lands specialist committee, Silviculture committee, Forest Education specialist committee, Law enforcement committee, Wolf committee, Governor's Council on Forestry, Lake States Lumber Association, BMP Advisory Group, Lake States Resource Alliance,...) WCFA also meets formally with the USFS and DNR twice yearly at the Public Forest Resource Group meetings. All 29 counties participate and pay dues. Colette Matthews is the executive director and they have an elected Board of Directors. They work very closely with the individual counties and their respective forest administrators.</i>	

REC 2004.2	Reference: FSC Indicator 5.3.a
Recommendation 2004.2- Counties should consider recruiting aspen for downed woody debris in even-aged management treatments (we observed few large aspen being retained on sites).	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
Not aware of any changes to retention or recruitment policies.	

REC 2004.3	Reference: Criterion 6.1
Recommendation 2004.3- Ensure template for new EA fully covers all the indicators in Criterion 6.1 of the Lake States Standard.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
The current EA process (in conjunction with site-level assessments completed prior to harvest) covers the elements of Criterion 6.1.	

REC 2004.4	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.2, 6.2.C
Recommendation 2004.4: Counties should enhance the training of County Forest staff on identification of TES flora and fauna and their habitats, and safeguard measures.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
This recommendation is somewhat redundant with CAR 2004.8. NHI training is planned for February 2006. Iron County foresters have undergone training in rare plant identification.	

REC 2004.5	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3
Recommendation 2004.5: County Forests should develop and implement quantitative guidelines for stand level retention (covering green trees, snags, downed woody debris) to ensure more consistent implementation.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
No action on this recommendation. 2006 audit showed that this remains an opportunity for improvement, especially in even-aged harvests.	
REC 2004.6	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3a
County Forests with high deer densities should set up exclosures to measure deer impacts on tree and herbaceous species.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
Not aware of any actions on this recommendation.	
REC 2004.7	Reference: FSC Criterion 6.5
County Forests should develop and implement clear guidelines or standards for protection of water resources not covered under BMPs (e.g., vernal pool and wetland protection)	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
Not aware of any actions on this recommendation	
REC 2004.8	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.9.d
County Forests should develop more pro-active programs for controlling invasive exotics	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
WCFP has taken significant actions to improve upon control of invasive exotics, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Species of the Upper Midwest - E. Czarapata, has been purchased for all Counties as an excellent reference for identification and management. • Training session on Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species is an agenda item for March 30-31 WCFA Spring Administrator's Meeting (Instructor Jane Cummings-Carlson, DNR Forest Health). • DNR efforts are progressing on invasive species management. The County Forests are participating in an advisory committee for one of the four tracks (Track 1 - Forestry BMP's for Invasive Species) of DNR's effort to develop BMP's for Invasive Species in Wisconsin. 	
REC 2004.9	Reference: FSC Criterion 9.1

County Forests with pristine lakes should consider “walk in access only” to limit introduction of invasive exotic species.
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments
Recommendation 2004.9 has been struck as the topic is being addressed in a broader context of actions on HCVF and invasives.

REC 2004.10	Reference: FSC Criterion 8.1, 8.2
Add variables to standard recon to allow monitoring of changes to stand-level considerations such as tree grade, species composition (volume and basal area), regeneration density by species, etc. This would allow a better determination of how management is affecting the sustainability of healthy, high quality, forests and products.	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
See response to CAR 2004.9	

2.5 General Observations

All observations are included under the appropriate CAR, Recommendation, or in section 3.1.

2.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

Background/Justification:	
CAR 2006.1	WCFP will improve its monitoring systems by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. setting targets to bring Recon back into currency- and demonstrating progress on those targets; 2. demonstrating continued progress on implementing the improved flora and fauna monitoring framework; 3. Expanding chapter 3000 to include the monitoring elements listed in <i>County Forest Program Monitoring & Assessment Protocol</i> and how those provide feedback into management of County Forests.
Deadline	2007 surveillance audit
Reference	<i>Criterion 8.1 and 8.2</i>

2.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document review, SCS concludes that management of the Wisconsin County Forest Program continues to be in overall conformance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. However, as described in sections 2.4 and 3.1 there are several CARs that still need to be addressed by their respective due dates. SCS observed numerous examples of exemplary management on Wisconsin County Forests during the 2006 audit. In conclusion continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to ongoing progress in closing out the open CARs and subject to subsequent annual audits.

3.0 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

This section is divided into two parts: Section 3.1 details the determining of conformance and non-conformance with the elements of the standard examined during this audit. Section 3.2 discusses any stakeholder comments.

3.1 Evaluation of Conformance

C= Conformance

NC= Non Conformance

C*= Overall Conformance, but there are outstanding discretionary CARs

REQUIREMENT	C/NC	COMMENT/CAR
P1 Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.		
C1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.	C	The new County 15-year plans conform with national, local, and administrative requirements. Foresters are cognizant and respectful of laws in their on-the-ground resource management.
C1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.	C	3-year county audits continue to ensure payments are made
C1.3. In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.	C	Treaties and other agreements continue to be respected
C1.4. Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case by case basis, by the certifiers and by the involved or affected parties.	N/A	
C1.5. Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.	C	Harvests are closely monitored for illegal logging. We were unable to assess impacts of unauthorized OHV use, a growing problem in some Counties, because of snow cover.
C1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.	C	WCFP demonstrates a solid commitment to FSC through its written statements, and more importantly its actions.
P3 The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.		
C3.2. Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.	C	See comments under CAR 2004.1

C3.3. Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.	C	See comments under CAR 2004.1
P4 Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.		
P5 Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.		
C5.1. Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.	C	Pulpwood markets, although declining a bit, remain very strong. Funding all of the components necessary for exemplary resource management as defined by the FSC is always a challenge, however, there is no concern with respect to long-term economic viability.
C5.2. Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.	C	Excellent utilization observed on this audit. Timber markets are very good in the Lake States.
C5.3. Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.	C	Observations in the 2006 audit confirm prior assessments of conformance. There is an outstanding recommendation for 5.3.a. for retention of coarse woody debris.
C5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.	C	All forests visited in 2006 audit sold a broad range of products including veneer, sawtimber, pulpwood, non timber forest products.
C5.5. Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.	C	The auditors confirmed wetland and riparian buffers on three sales in 2006 audit.
C5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels that can be permanently sustained.	C	The County Forests are clearly not pushing their harvest activities to biological limits. Rotation ages are either at the standard for the region or, in many cases, exceed commonly accepted ages. There is a concern about aging Recon data- see related CAR on monitoring.
P6 Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.		
C6.1. Assessments of environmental impacts shall be completed -- appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources -- and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.	C	The EA as part of the 15 year plan addresses most aspects of Criterion 6.1. Kotar habitat typing continues to be used. Site level environmental assessments, e.g., NHI reviews, continue to be implemented.

C 6.2. Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting shall be controlled.	C	Observations in 2006 confirmed continued conformance. Auditors observed NHI hits (goshawk sites) being identified and protected on two different sales. Iron County foresters received training in rare plant identification. Many County forests are in the process of implementing a data sharing agreement with Endangered Resources for access to the NHI database.
C6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including: a) Forest regeneration and succession. b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.	C	Silvicultural activities observed during the 2006 audit confirmed conformance with this Criterion.
C6.4. Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.	NC	Some progress has been made toward conformance with this Criterion. See discussion under CAR 2004.5
C6.5. Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and to protect water resources.	C*	Unable to fully assess because of snow cover. Where observation could be made conformance was observed. See discussion under CAR 2004.6 for rutting criterion.
C6.6. Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.	C	WCFP implemented new procedures to ensure that a written prescription is prepared for each herbicide application.
C6.9. The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.	C	See response under Recommendation 2004.8.
P7 A management plan -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations -- shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.		
C7.1. The management plan and supporting	C	The new County 15 years plans, in conjunction with

documents shall provide: a) Management objectives. b) description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands. c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories. d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection. e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics. f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments. g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species. h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.		supporting documents (e.g., <i>Silvicultural Handbook</i> , <i>Timber Sale Handbook</i> , <i>Public Forest Lands Handbook</i> , <i>Ecological Landscapes Handbook</i> , etc), meet this Criterion.
C7.2. The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.	C	Although the County plans have moved from a 10-year to a 15-year revision cycle, they are active documents and amended periodically as needed.
C7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plans.	C*	See discussion under CAR 2004.8
C7.4. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.	C	All planning documents are publicly available.
P8 Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.		
C8.1. The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations, as well as, the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.	C*	This Criterion is elaborated by three indicators in the Lake States standard: <i>8.1.a. The frequency of monitoring activities follows the schedule outlined in the management plan.</i> <i>8.1.b. Monitoring is carried out to assess:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The degree to which management goals and objectives have been achieved;</i> • <i>Deviations from the management plan;</i> • <i>Unexpected effects of management activities;</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social (see Criterion 4.4) and environmental (see Criterion 6.1) effects of management activities.</i> <p><i>8.1.c. Public and large, private land owners or managers take the lead in identifying, initiating, and supporting research efforts to address pertinent ecological questions. Small and medium private landowners or managers use information that has been developed by researchers and other managers.</i></p> <p>The WCFP is in overall conformance with Indicators 8.1.b and 8.1.c, though more work is needed on flora and fauna monitoring. See <i>County Forest Monitoring and Assessment Protocol</i> (appendix A) and discussion under CAR 2004.9 for more detail. There is a non-conformance with Indicator 8.1.a. because of the significant backlog in updating Recon, which is a key component of County forest monitoring. Updating Recon is addressed in CAR 2006.1.</p>
8.2. Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators: a) yield of all forest products harvested, b) growth rates, regeneration, and condition of the forest, c) composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna, d) environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations, and e) cost, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.	C*	<p>A comprehensive list of County forest monitoring activities was produced- See <i>County Forest Monitoring and Assessment Protocol</i> (appendix A). The monitoring activities detailed in this document demonstrates overall conformance with 8.2. There is still more work to be done to address 8.2.c and 8.2.d, however work is in progress as noted under CAR 2004.9 and 2006.1.</p>

3.2 Stakeholder Comment

In addition to the names listed under section 2.3, the following individuals were consulted as part of this audit:

Randy Hoffman
Loren Ayers

3.3 Controversial Issues

No exceptionally controversial or difficult issues presented themselves during this surveillance audit.

3.4 Changes in Certificate Scope

There were no changes in the scope of this certificate during the previous year.

COUNTY FOREST PROGRAM MONITORING & ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

What follows is a listing of new, and existing, processes and information related to monitoring on the County Forests. Responsibilities are a blend of DNR and County staff. The framework for the monitoring is referenced to criterion 8.2, FSC Lake States Regional Standard. These processes address FSC CAR 2004.9 for the Wisconsin County Forest Program.

8.2 Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:

a. Yield of all forest products harvested

What: **Annual timber sale reports 32A,, 35A, 36A, 37A**

- 32A – Volume harvested by species for each County (based on closed sales)
- 35A – Acres established, sold, and closed by County
- 36A – Gross volume & value by County (based on closed sales)
- 37A – Gross species, volume, value by County (“ “ “)

When: Run for State Fiscal year (7/1 – 6/30) and Calendar year

Who: DNR County Forest specialist – distributed to counties

Use: Accomplishment reporting, acreage control, and removals

What: **Annual Accomplishment Reporting**

- Electronic – Records harvests established and Recon updated in lieu of a timber sale

When: Bi-annually – Fiscal Year basis

Who: Reported by field and summarized by DNR County Forest specialist

Use: DNR accomplishment reporting and acreage control

b. Growth rates, regeneration, and condition of the forest

What: **FIA Data**

- Net growth of growing stock by County & Species (*This data is only statistically valid for Counties in total)
- Volume of growing stock by species – Total of all counties
- Average annual growing stock mortality – “ “ “ “

When: On FIA cycles - Currently FIA is on a 5 year cycle

Who: DNR FIA specialist

Use: Assess trends in growth / removals and mortality for program

What: **Plantation (Regeneration) and Cultural Report (Form 2400-79)**

When: Plantings – 1, 3, and 5th year after plantings
Natural regeneration – Only on sites with questionable regeneration 3-10 yrs. after harvest.

Who: Field Forester (DNR or County)

Use: Assessing regeneration success and need for additional regeneration effort

What: **Annual Forest Health Report**

When: Calendar year report

Who: DNR Forest Health coordinator

Use: Assess potential impacts and development of management actions for upcoming year.
Available on DNR internet site:
dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fh/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2004.pdf

What: **DNR RECON program** (Stand level info on stocking, composition, and structure).

When: Maintained on DNR main frame with input from Counties. Continuously updated.

Who: Input from field staff

Use: Scheduling of forest management practices, Inventory of stand level data including forest type, acreage, habitat typing, stocking, volume, soil type, management objective, silvicultural prescription –Provides base data for all Recon reports.

What: **Annual Accomplishment Reporting**

- Electronic – Records site prep, planting, seeding, and cultural treatments

When: Bi-annually – Fiscal Year basis

Who: Reported by field and summarized by DNR County Forest specialist

Use: Accomplishment reporting

What: **County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan & Environmental Assessment**

When: At long range planning intervals. Most recent 2005 - reoccurring on 15 yr. intervals.

Who: DNR prepares analysis and coordinates public input on EA

Use: Assess condition of the County Forest

c. Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna

**DNR has statutory responsibility for fauna and thus coordinates all related monitoring and surveys.*

What: **Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan (i.e. Statewide Wildlife Plan)**

When: Completed 2005 and scheduled for regular periodic updates

Who: DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources maintains through solicited input

Use: Monitors habitat needs of Wisconsin's species of greatest conservation need.

-Identifies natural community restoration opportunities for landscapes

-Identifies fish, bird, mammal, amphibian, reptile, and invertebrate species needing proactive management by each landscape

-Identifies species distribution probabilities by landscape and natural community

-Identifies threats and conservation actions for species of greatest conservation need

-Available at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/cwcp/index.htm#Whatis>

What: **Multiple surveys and data sources (see attached comprehensive list)**

When: Variable, but recurring time frames

Who: DNR or citizen-based surveys

Use: Data summarized periodically and communicated to land managers (e.g. County Forests) for application on the ground. Identifies trends & habitat needs.

*The Aquatic & Terrestrial Resources Inventory (ATRI) <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/atri/>

This website is a metadata explorer that provides information on where to find various studies and baseline data on flora and fauna in Wisconsin. Most of this information is not county specific but provides information instrumental in assessing habitat needs on public lands such as the county forests. DNR is generally responsible for analyzing the data and identifying habitat needs and information to the land managers so they can apply adaptive management.

This site is currently undergoing review. A spatial element is being added (ATRI spatial explorer) so that information specific to individual counties can be accessed.

What: **Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI)**

When: Updated continuously

Who: DNR maintains. *Most County Forests are finalizing a data-sharing agreement to directly access the info for their specific County, and to provide updated info on rare and endangered species.

Use: Inventory or sensitive, rare, and endangered species & communities. Information used to avoid or mitigate impacts during forest operations.

What: **DNR RECON program** (Stand level info on stocking, composition, and structure).

When: Maintained on DNR main frame with input from Counties. Continuously updated but forest composition comparisons generally done during long range planning (15 yr. intervals) or special requests

Who: Input from field staff

Use: Assess changes in forest age and composition for marketing and analysis of habitat needs and trends.

What: **Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)- compliance audits**

When: 1/3 done annually (3 yr. rotation)

Who: DNR

Use: Assess compliance with HCP and protection of KBB and its habitat
*8 counties are partners in the KBB HCP

d. Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations

What: **Environmental assessment - County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

When: At long range planning intervals. Most recent 2005 - reoccurring on 15 yr. intervals.

Who: DNR prepares analysis and coordinates public input on EA

Use: Assess impacts of County Forest operations

What: **Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report and Narrative (Form 2460-1)**

When: At timber sale establishment phase (approx. 800 sales annually for program)

Who: Field Forester - required for each timber sale prior to sale

Use: Assess impacts of individual timber sale

What: **Best Management Practices (BMP) for Water Quality**

When: Last completed 2003 - Updated periodically

Who: DNR coordinates

Use: Assess implementation of BMP's. Indirectly this monitors water quality impacts from forest operations.

What: **Environmental Assessment - County Forest withdrawals**

When: As needed upon filing of withdrawal applications

Who: DNR

Use: Assess impacts of land being withdrawn from County Forest designation

What: **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**

When: 2005-2010: Updated on 5 year intervals

Who: DNR and others

Use: Assess trends, needs, priorities for outdoor recreation

What: **County Forest Committee Meetings**

When: Monthly

Who: County Board participants and members of the general public

Use: Provides a forum for ongoing assessment of forest operations and social impacts

e. Cost, productivity, and efficiency of forest management

What: **Annual Work Plan**

When: Fall of each year

Who: County Forest staff with assistance from DNR

Use: Identify work to be completed with the budget requested. Requires County Board approval.

What: **Annual County Forest Report**

When: Spring / Summer of each year

Who: County Forest staff

Use: Feedback to County Board and holders of the County Forest plans as to the costs, productivity, and efficiency of the previous year's work on the Forest

Appendix B-- **Developing the Framework for a Monitoring Program**

Developing and implementing a comprehensive floral and faunal monitoring program is a highly complex and expensive undertaking that cannot be adequately accomplished in 1-2 years. In order to be effective, monitoring programs must be relevant to current management issues and explicitly linked with decision-making processes, both of which vary across properties, and then integrated within a larger monitoring system to yield large-scale information which is collectively useful. This is especially true with Wisconsin county forests where it would be impossible, even with significant state assistance, for a single property to adequately address all ecological, spatial, temporal, and programmatic aspects of a comprehensive monitoring program. A collective approach will be needed in which the first priority is to maximize utilization of existing data, information, and programs.

The following draft process is being used by the WDNR and WCFA to evaluate existing information and management options prior to establishing new monitoring programs. This process will be subject to significant discussion, review, and revision. Current emphasis is on steps 1 and 3.

- 1) **List known and potential resources within each county forest, including flora, fauna, natural communities, natural features, High Conservation Value Forests, and water resources.**
 - a) Determine Ecological Landscapes and ecological context for each county forest (completed; see Table 1, Figs. 1-3)
 - b) Extract relevant information from Wisconsin's "*Wildlife Action Plan*"
 - i) List vertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) for each county forest, organized by Ecological Landscape and Natural Community (a 4-county pilot has been completed; see Table 2 – Iron County, Table 3 - Ashland and Price Counties, and Table 4 - Bayfield County)
 - ii) For each county forest, provide relevant SGCN summary sheets which include ranking scores, natural community (habitat) association tables, landscape-level distribution maps, and conservation threats and action information (see samples in Appendix A)
 - c) Link Natural Communities with forest cover types and / or WISCLAND land cover classes.
 - i) The *Wildlife Action Plan* and forest management currently use two different land classification systems. Crosswalks between forest cover-types and natural communities have been attempted in the past; reassess the level of accuracy needed in the conversion and evaluate past recommendations.
 - d) Include data, information, and context from the County 15 Year Plans, Wildlife

Management, Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, Fish and Habitat Research, Wildlife and Forestry Research, Forestry, Endangered Resources, Water, WBCI All Bird Plan, and the Ecosystem Management Planning Team (et al.).

- 2) **Identify and provide for statutory requirements** (county forest mandates, threatened / endangered species management, State Natural Area management, etc.)
- 3) **Identify desired attributes, direct and indirect management goals, and potential secondary benefits for non-timber forest resources.**
 - a) Specify and examine existing goals.
 - b) Establish new goals commensurate with resource conservation needs where / when possible
 - i) Direct goals with quantitative, measurable outcomes. Could include the management of X acres of habitat with conditions specifically designed for wildlife or resource conservation (e.g., grasslands for Sharp-tailed Grouse, development or retention of X stems of coarse woody debris per unit area, maintenance of ground water recharge zone)
 - ii) Indirect goals with qualitative, less measurable outcomes. Could include decreasing white-tailed deer preferred habitat (and presumably deer densities) near vulnerable State Natural Areas or natural communities.
 - iii) Secondary benefits. These are not goals per se, but rather recognition and documentation of management practices and goals which are consistent with the needs of certain target species, communities, or forest and landscape conditions.
- 4) **Locate, evaluate, and utilize periodic reports summarizing relevant natural resource research, monitoring, and management information.**
 - a) Wisconsin's EcoAtlas (see Figs 4-6) allows users to locate and retrieve ecological information and data associated with specific topics and areas on the landscape. Available at <http://atriweb.info/EcoAtlas/>.
 - b) Forest Sciences, Wildlife and Forestry Research, Natural Heritage Inventory, Wisconsin's Water Monitoring Strategy, WBCI Coordinated Bird Monitoring program, et al., provide information on species occurrences and trends in natural resources as well as applicable research and management information. Improve awareness and access to this information.
 - c) WDNR will negotiate with the WCFA for the provision of new services related to the synthesis, reporting, and interpretation of resource monitoring information relevant to county forests.
- 5) **Evaluate how current forest condition and management influences flora, fauna, natural communities, habitat attributes, and landscape issues.** A detailed evaluation should

identify how existing monitoring and management information can be applied immediately to address compelling issues. This should include all forest cover type, management scenarios, and a select list of species, communities, and environmental parameters (e.g., SGCN, ground water quality).

- a) List and assess known management options.
- b) Identify improvements or additional objectives which can be addressed
- c) Prioritize, select alternatives
- d) Verify presence of target flora, fauna, natural community, or condition
- e) Approve short list, select best alternatives
- f) Implement alternatives via

- i) 15 Year Plans
- ii) Annual Partnership Planning Meetings
- iii) Monthly Forestry Committee meetings
- iv) Wildlife Biologist check of harvest plans
- v) Personal interaction / involvement

- 6) **Assess information and management gaps** a) Specify new or unaddressed taxa, habitat, natural community, and ecosystem-related management issues b) Determine need for new resource monitoring objectives, goals, or programs

- 7) **Develop and implement new monitoring strategies** a) Goals, objectives, priorities b) Integration c) Design, resources d) Implementation e) Reporting